

[Saratoga, Saratoga Co. NY]

UNIVERSALISM AT SARATOGA

There has been an organized Universalist Society at this world-renowned watering-place for over forty years; and there was once a church edifice, but that was sold several years since, and it is now some time since there has been any attempt to have regular meetings there, so that visitors of our faith have had to forgo attending religious services, or go to hear some of the expounders of a partial salvation. Last year Rev. C[harles] A. Skinner of Cambridge, Mass., being on a visit there, was invited to deliver a sermon in the Opera House, the only place that could be obtained. He had a large audience, and gave a good Gospel sermon. Quite a large number of Universalist visitors went there, and had an opportunity of becoming known to each other. This year the Trustees of the Society desire to have preaching every Sunday during the months of July and August, and have engaged, so far, Rev. J. M. Pullman of Troy, for the first and second Sundays in August, and the editor of this paper [Rev. George H. Emerson] for the third and fourth Sundays. The Opera House has been secured for the services, by the kindness of the Messrs. Leland, proprietors of the Union Hotel, in whose grounds it is situated.

Notice will be given in the *Ambassador* when all the Sundays are filled, with the names of the preachers expected.

Christian Ambassador, New York, Saturday May 18, 1867

MEETINGS IN SARATOGA SPRINGS

Arrangements are completed whereby there will be religious services by Universalist ministers in Saratoga Springs every Sunday in July and August, as follows:

For July: Rev. R. A. Ballou the first Sunday; Rev. R[ichmond] Fisk the second Sunday; Rev. Charles A. Skinner the third and fourth Sundays.

For August: Rev. J. M. Pullman the first and second Sundays; Rev. G[eorge] H. Emerson the third and fourth Sundays.

Christian Ambassador, New York, Saturday July 6, 1867

From REV. DOLPHUS SKINNER, D.D.

In December, 1824, he removed to Saratoga Springs, N. Y. and broke ground, in that celebrated watering place, for the establishment of a Universalist Society and Church. A neat brick edifice was erected in the summer of 1825... In April, 1827, by invitation of the Universalist Society in Utica, Mr. Skinner removed from Saratoga Springs to the then village of Utica...

Christian Ambassador, New York, Saturday August 17, 1867

[Saratoga, Saratoga Co. NY]

SARATOGA SPRINGS

UNIVERSALISM IN SARATOGA SPRINGS

Not much can be said for our cause in Saratoga Springs. There is neither Universalist nor Unitarian Church in that place. But there are a few families of excellent worth who are warmly devoted to Universalism, and who would rejoice if they could attend regular Universalist services. Years ago, Rev. D[olphus] Skinner was instrumental in founding a Society in the place, and a church was built. For years, there was preaching there a part of the time. Following Mr. Skinner, we learn that David A. Cooper, Dr. Priestly (from England), T[homas] J. Whitcomb, P[hineas] Hathaway, Chester Patterson, Chas. Woodhouse, I[saac] D. Williamson, T[hodore] D. Cook, William Parker, J[oseph] A. Aspinwall, and others, have preached there—some of these brethren as pastors. In 1831 Mr. Beekman Huling—a thorough Universalist—willing to give and to work, came to Saratoga. Mainly through his agency, the church debt was paid, and the fortunes of the Society were kept up. But circumstances were against the Society. In time, it ceased to be a working body. The church was sold, and the proceeds, put at interest, yield now about \$100 a year. This keeps up the Society organization. Mr. E. J. Huling, son of Beekman, inheriting his father's zeal, is very active. The kindness of the Lelands, proprietors of the Union Hotel, in giving the use of their Opera House for the purpose, has enabled our brethren to hold services the present "season." We should say there was one hundred and fifty present last Sunday. The same number in a country church would be a large congregation. In the mammoth Opera House, they of course did not appear to be numerous. So far as we may speak, the labors of the several ministers the present season have been more than acceptable.

Christian Ambassador, New York, Saturday August 24, 1867

SARATOGA

On the first Sunday in July the summer services begin in Saratoga. The Opera House will be made available, the same as last year. The opening services will be conducted by the editor of the *Ambassador* [Rev. Thomas J. Sawyer].

The Ambassador, New York, 20 Jun 1868

SARATOGA

After the first Sunday in July (on which day the editor preaches there), Rev. E. R. Sanborn will preach out "the season," that is, to the last of August, in Saratoga. The Opera House is secured for the meetings.

The Ambassador, New York, 27 Jun 1868

[Saratoga, Saratoga Co. NY]

FROM SARATOGA SPRINGS

To the Editor of the *Ambassador*.

A few weeks at the "great watering place" have afforded me sufficient data to speak understandingly not only of our cause here, but of things generally.

THE CAUSE

There are possibly six outspoken Universalists from the old Society; and there is a goodly number who are thoroughly Universalist in thought and feeling who, from various motives and external influences, are either non-committal, or are wholly identified with some one of the Orthodox churches. I am quite sure that I never staid so long a time in any place where there was so much bigotry and intolerance, as are to be found here. Universalism is looked upon as pure Satanism; and the periodical advents of Mr. Frost, the Baptist revivalist, and the annual Methodist re-awakening, seldom do anything to lessen this idea, which has become so immovably fixed in the popular mind. No phase of Liberal Christianity seems to flourish here. I haven't heard of any Unitarian element yet....

THE CONGREGATION

Our congregations in the Opera House, where we hold our services, are mostly made up of the floating population, and though still small enough, are already increasing, mounting up last Sunday to two hundred. Some interest is manifested, and were we in quieter times, I am confident we could form a nucleus, at least, around which there would be constant accessions from many quarters, but this is the "busy time" for Saratoga, and comparatively few of its people are able to attend to the affairs of Church in earnest. Could some means be devised, by which we could sustain preaching during the whole year, no long time would elapse before we should have a good Society. This "summer preaching" does nothing toward organization, though the seed may spring up, we know not how, or where. I was told by a graduate of Tufts, who is chorister of the Presbyterian Church here, that "Saratoga is too wicked a place for Universalists to thrive in." It is a little wicked now, to be sure....

Edmund R. Sanborn

Saratoga Springs, August 1, 1868

Christian Ambassador, New York, 15 Aug 1868

[Saratoga, Saratoga Co. NY]

THE SARATOGA MEETINGS

While we were engaged in conducting the religious services on the morning of the last Sunday in August, we were disturbed by an unusual noise in what seemed to us the yard in front of the Opera House. We lost the train of thought for an instant; and it is the recollection of this that assures us the outside noise was unusual. At the close of the services we saw, on leaving the building, an excited crowd near the gate-way. Conspicuous among them were the waiters of the hotel. We learned that at about the hour of 11 a man was shot, dying instantly, in the boot-room—but a few rods from the place where our congregation was assembled. It was the noise attendant on that tragic deed that disturbed us. The particulars [sic] have appeared in the secular papers, and are probably known to most of our readers. Rum, with the lawlessness resulting from it, was the cause. The person who committed the deed avers that he was only purposing to protect himself from the intoxicated man whom he shot. But the fact that he carried a concealed weapon—a revolver, and the further fact that the person who affronted him was intoxicated, told against him. The Coroner's jury brought a verdict of wilful [sic] shooting. The trial comes off this month. The sad affair is full of suggestion. We may allude to it again.

It is not improbable that the serious state of the public mind after so tragic an event, accounts for the unusually large congregation present in the afternoon. This was the closing service of the season. It seemed to us a strange thing to stand upon an opera stage, speaking in so large a room, and addressing a congregation, a good portion of which evidently came from the hotels. We hope the summer meetings did good.

The Ambassador, New York, September 14, 1867

Transcribed in 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY